

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT HAPPINESS

„Happiness is an attitude toward the journey of life, not what you find at your destination.

That's what happiness researcher and best-selling author Shawn Achor writes.

But what is happiness? And most importantly, how can we be happy and so, as researchers have proven, be 31% more productive than people who go through life with a negative or neutral mindset?

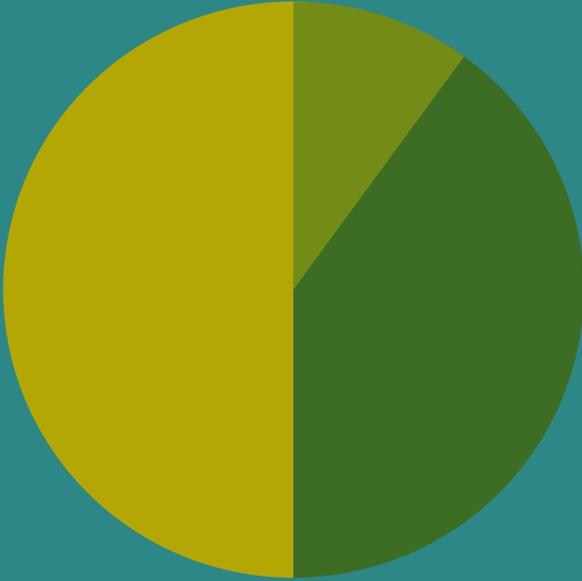
By Sabine Gromer



What to now about happiness

HAPPINESS = A QUALITY-OF-LIFE INCREASE

Happiness research, also known as positive psychology, has been dealing with the topic of happiness for years. Positive psychologists ask themselves how people, who are content and inwardly balanced, deal with difficult situations. What tools do such people have, and how do they manage to see a glass half-empty as a glass half-full? The answer, that 'making' happiness requires more than mere affirmations. You can't achieve a positive attitude by chanting down "I-think-I'm-happy" mantras. Save yourself the trouble, happiness needs more.



THE CAKE CHART OF HAPPINESS

A study from the US found that about 50% of life satisfaction is due to genetics and 10% to external circumstances. Now, in the remaining 40% is the potential to manage our quality of life actively.

- genetics
- external circumstances
- freely controllable potential



CAN YOU BUY HAPPINESS?

Science has proven in several studies that the adage "Money Can't Buy Happiness" is undoubtedly justified. But only in part. Money can buy happiness only up to about \$75,000 USD - after that, it has no significant impact on our emotional well-being. Pursuing happiness through intangible means has proven to be more effective.



What to know about happiness

WHAT'S THE POINT OF HAPPINESS AT ALL?

Happiness is associated with lower heart rates and blood pressure. Happy people get sick less often, are better protected from stress because they release less cortisol. They are less prone to pain, dizziness, muscle tension, and heartburn, and overall, live longer. What's more, happiness makes you successful. After all, with a positive attitude - as mentioned above - we are a whopping 31% more productive. Yet it doesn't have to be "natural" happiness. We know that "experimental reinforcement" of positive emotions also equates to better results at work. People who are happy with their jobs are less likely to quit or take sick leave. In this regard, happiness and job performance are closely linked: happy people do better work, and people who do good work are more likely to be happy.

GOOD NEWS

The science is clear. We can increase our happiness levels by taking specific actions.

HOW DO YOU INCREASE HAPPINESS?

A list of my personal favourites for boosting happiness levels

1

Connect with people.

A Harvard University study conducted for over 80 years explains that interpersonal relationships are fundamental to happiness. This makes it all the more important to nurture your interpersonal relationships. Surround yourself with people who make you feel supported and loved. Nothing is more effective at increasing happiness.

2

Do good to others.

People who do good for others significantly increased their sense of happiness. So-called "random acts of kindness" - such as helping an old woman cross the street, giving someone a gift, etc. - lead to an increased release of oxytocin and dopamine, which boosts life satisfaction.



3

Use your strengths.

Find out what your strengths are - for example, using the CliftonStrengths Finder, and try to use them every day.



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4

Gratitude Exercises.

Create a gratitude jar that you fill with notes and mementos of beautiful moments. Empty it at the end of a year and stick the contents in a book.



5

Practice mental hygiene.

Think for a moment about what helps you feel good. For me, it's a piece of chocolate, nice music, or an episode of Pumuckl. Use these things to avoid descending into the deep valley of unhappiness and separate yourself from over-work.



6

Vision board.

At the end of each year, I create vision boards about how I want to feel in the new year. This strengthens inner alignment and provides moments of happiness.



7

Allow feelings.

Don't push your feelings away - even if it can be hard to live through them now - you will feel better in the long run. So, allow them.

all the feels

In addition to these To Do's, however, there are patterns you should urgently work on, as they have a strong negative impact on your well-being.



PERFECTIONISM

Not to be confused with conscientiousness, which is about reasonable and tangible expectations, perfectionism is about unreasonable, intangible goals that lead to a negative mindset. Perfectionism leads to premature death, through increased cortisol, blood pressure, and heart rate. When everything is perfect, there is nothing left to do. Nothing to discover and no challenges left. Don't be perfect.



COMPARISONS

When we compare ourselves with others, we often feel a sense of lacking. But justifiable and healthy comparisons can arise by finding what is admirable in others and what we can learn from them. Regardless, the best comparisons are when we compare ourselves to ourselves. What am I doing better today from yesterday?





MATERIALISM

Tying our happiness to external things and material wealth is dangerous because we can lose our happiness abruptly if our material circumstances change.



MAXIMIZATION

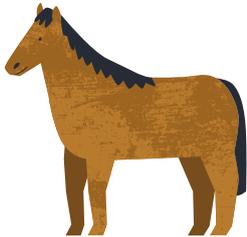
Maximisers are constantly looking for better options, even when the status quo is satisfactory. This leaves them little time to be present and grateful for the good moments in their lives.

We are not born happy. We cannot buy happiness. But we have happiness in our hands, and we can shape it to lead us through life successfully. Work on it.

Good luck.

Sabine Grömer





ATTACHEMENT

A FAIRY TALE

THE LOST HORSE OR THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS

A long, long time ago, in a village in northern China, there lived a man who owned a beautiful horse. This horse was so beautiful that people came from far away to admire it. And they all agreed that the man was blessed because he owned such a stunning horse.

"Might be," he replied. "But what looks like a blessing could also be a curse."

One day the horse bolted and was gone. People came up to express regret, given the misfortune.

"Might be," he replied. "But what seems like a curse could also be a blessing."

The horse returned a few weeks later. Not alone but with a whole herd of wild horses. According to the law, these now belonged to the man and made him rich. The neighbors came over to congratulate him on this good fortune.

"Now, you have indeed been blessed."

"Might be," he replied. "But what looks like a blessing may also be a curse."

Sometime later, his only son tried to ride one of those wild horses. He was thrown off and broke his leg. The neighbors came over and expressed regret. It could only be a curse.

"Might be," said the old man. "But what looks like a curse could also be a blessing."

A week later, the king came through the village and drafted all the non-disabled young men to go to war against the people from the north. It was a terrible war. All the young men from the village were killed. Only the man's son survived because he had a broken leg and couldn't be drafted. Since then, people in this village say:

"What looks like a blessing could also be a curse. And what looks like a curse could be a blessing."



LITERATURE. LINKS. RECOMMENDATIONS.



- The Happiness Advantage. The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work. Shawn Achor. 2020.
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- The How of Happiness; Sonja Lyubomirsky Ph.D
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- Harvard Happiness Studie: Good genes are nice, but joy is better. <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2017/04/over-nearly-80-years-harvard-study-has-been-showing-how-to-live-a-healthy-and-happy-life/>
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- TEDx – Charles Duhigg, The power of Habit. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMbsGBIpP30>
- What makes a good life? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KkKuTCFvzI&t=608s>